

LIVE UNITED



Testimony for the

Michigan Senate Banking & Financial Institutions Committee

By

Christine Robere, President & CEO, United Way of the Lakeshore

March 8, 2016

Mister Chairman, members of the Committee, guests, my name is Christine Robere and I am the President and CEO of the United Way of the Lakeshore. I have been working in the United Way system in Michigan for more than 23 years, from Gaylord, to Midland, and the past 13 years on the Lakeshore in Muskegon.

When the 2008 recession occurred, it took many good-paying jobs. Today we have many families living on one income rather than two, and many families are also seeing less in wages and salaries than previously. Helping working people is at an all-time high, especially those in the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed category that we refer to as ALICE. In addition, we see 1 of 4 children in families living in poverty. The health and human service needs of both working people and the working poor in every Michigan community have grown. Trying to help working families is the number one priority for United Way. **That is why we are promoting no-interest/low-interest loan programs as a benefit for workers.**

Members of the Committee, we cannot support this legislation before you today. **We believe that SB 842 and SB 843 actually will work to hurt the ALICE population when fees that equate to 150-500% APR are allowed to be tacked on to loans, which is currently the case in Ohio where similar legislation was enacted.**

Thank you.

cc: Sen. Goeff Hansen, Rep. Holly Hughes, and Rep. Marcia Hovey-Wright